

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. **(CURRENTLY AMENDED)** In a reprocessor having a circulation system for circulating a liquid sterilant or microbial deactivation fluid through a chamber that forms a part of said circulation system, a water filtration system for filtering water used in said reprocessor, said water filtration system, comprising:

a fluid feed line connectable to a source of pressurized water forming a portion of said circulation system, one end of said fluid feed line in fluid communication with said chamber;

a directional valve disposed in said fluid feed line;

a first filter element disposed in said fluid feed line for filtering fluids flowing therethrough, said first filter element located upstream from said chamber;

a second filter element disposed in said fluid feed line for filtering fluids flowing therethrough, said second filter element located between said first filter element and said chamber, said second filter element being downstream from said first filter element and having the capacity to filter particles smaller than said first filter element; [[and]]

a water line connectable to a source of pressurized water, said supply line connected to said fluid feed line at a location between said directional valve and said first filter element; and

a bypass line connected to said fluid feed line to define a fluid path that bypasses said first and second filter elements; said water filtration system being connected to said fluid circulation system, said bypass line connected at one end to said fluid feed line between said directional valve and said water inlet line and connected at another end to said fluid feed line between said second filter element and said chamber, wherein all water entering said reprocessor first passes through said fluid feed line and said filter elements, and a portion of all fluid circulated through said circulation system passes through said fluid feed line and said filter elements.

2. (CANCELED)

3. (ORIGINAL) A reprocessor as defined in claim 1, further comprising valve means operable to isolate said first and second elements from said circulation system and from each other.

4. (ORIGINAL) A reprocessor as defined in claim 1, further comprising means for determining the integrity of said first and second filter elements.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A reprocessor as defined in claim 4, wherein said means for determining the integrity of said first and second filter elements includes a first differential pressure sensing device operable to sense a pressure differential across said first filter element, and a second differential pressure sensing device operable to sense a pressure differential across said second filter element.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A reprocessor as defined in claim 5, wherein said means for determining the integrity of said first and second filter elements includes:

means for isolating each filter element from said filtration systems,

means for ~~pressuring~~ pressurizing the upstream side of each of said isolated filter elements, and

means for determining the integrity of each filter element based upon the rate of the pressure drop across through said isolated filter element[[s]] over time.

7. (ORIGINAL) A reprocessor as defined in claim 1, wherein said first and second filter elements are disposed within a single filter housing.

8. (ORIGINAL) A reprocessor as defined in claim 1, wherein said first and second filter elements are disposed within separate filter housings and said second filter housing is downstream from said first filter housing.

9. **(CURRENTLY AMENDED)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items, comprising:
- a sterilizing chamber for receiving items to be sterilized;
 - a fluid circulation system for circulating fluids through said sterilization chamber;
 - means for generating a liquid sterilant from dry chemical reagents by mixing water therewith;
 - means for circulating said liquid sterilant through said fluid circulation system;
 - a water filtration system for filtering water entering said sterilizer, said filtration system including:
 - ~~a fluid feed line connectable to a source of pressurized water that forms a portion of said circulation system and is attached to said chamber;~~
 - a directional valve disposed in said fluid feed line;
 - a first filter element disposed in said fluid feed line for filtering fluids flowing therethrough, said first filter element located between said directional valve and said chamber downstream of said directional valve;
 - a second filter element disposed in said fluid feed line for filtering fluids flowing therethrough, said second filter element being downstream from located between said first filter element and said chamber and being capable of filtering smaller particles than said first filter element; [[and]]
 - a water line connected to said fluid feed line at a first intersection located between said directional valve and said first filter element; and
 - a bypass line connected to said fluid feed line to define a fluid path that bypasses said directional valve, said first intersection and said first and second filter elements, said water filtration system being connected to said fluid circulation system wherein all water entering said sterilizer first passes through said fluid feed line and said first and second filter, and at least a portion of said liquid sterilant flowing through said fluid circulation system passes through said fluid feed line.

10. **(CANCELED)**

11. **(CANCELED)**

12. **(ORIGINAL)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items as defined in claim 9, further comprising a UV treatment device for treating water from said source of pressurized water with ultraviolet radiation.

13. **(ORIGINAL)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items as defined in claim 12, wherein said UV treatment device is outside said fluid circulation system.

14. **(ORIGINAL)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items as defined in claim 9, further comprising means for determining the integrity of said first and second filter elements.

15. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items as defined in claim 14, wherein said means for determining the integrity of said first and second filter elements includes a first differential pressure sensing device associated with said first filter element, and a second differential pressure sensing device associated with said second filter element.

16. **(CURRENTLY AMENDED)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items as defined in claim 15, wherein said means for determining the integrity of said first and second filter elements includes:

means for isolating each filter element from said filtration systems,

means for pressuring the upstream side of each of said isolated filter elements,

[[and]]

means for pressurizing the upstream side of each of said isolated filter elements,

and

means for determining the integrity of each filter element based upon the pressure drop ~~across~~ through said filter elements over time.

17. **(ORIGINAL)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items as defined in claim 16, wherein said means for isolating said filter elements are valves on opposite sides of said filter elements.

18. **(ORIGINAL)** A sterilizer for sterilizing items as defined in claim 9, wherein said first and second filter elements are disposed within a single filter housing.

19. **(CURRENTLY AMENDED)** A method of operating a sterilizer having a chamber for receiving items to be sterilized, a fluid circulation system for circulating fluids through said chamber, means for generating a liquid sterilant from dry chemical reagents by mixing water therewith, and a water filtration system for filtering water entering said sterilizer, said filtration system including: a fluid feed line ~~connectable to a source of pressurized water that is attached to said chamber,~~ a directional valve disposed in said fluid feed line, a first filter element disposed in said fluid feed line for filtering fluids therethrough, said first filter element located between said directional valve and said chamber and downstream of said directional valve, a second filter element disposed in said fluid feed line for filtering fluids flowing therethrough, ~~said second filter element being downstream from~~ located between said first filter element and said chamber, said second filter element being capable of filtering smaller particles than said first filter element, a water line connected to said fluid feed line at a first intersection located between said directional valve and said first filter element, and a bypass line connected to said fluid feed line to define a fluid path that bypasses said directional valve and said first and second filter elements, ~~said water filtration system being connected to said fluid circulation system,~~ said method of operating comprising the steps of:

filling said sterilizer with water from a water source by passing said water through said first and second filter elements;

generating a liquid sterilant by mixing water filtered by said first and second filter elements with said dry chemical reagents; and

circulating said liquid sterilant through said fluid circulation system and said filtration system wherein a portion of said liquid sterilant is directed through said ~~fluid feed line and another portion is directed through said first and second filter elements,~~ and a portion is directed through said bypass conduit.

20. **(CANCELED)**

21. **(ORIGINAL)** A method of operating a sterilizer as defined in claim 19, further comprising the step of exposing said water to UV radiation before said water passes through said first and second filter elements.

22. **(ORIGINAL)** A method of operating a sterilizer as defined in claim 19, further comprising the step of testing the integrity of said filter elements after each sterile processing phase.

23. **(ORIGINAL)** In a reprocessor having a chamber for receiving items to be microbially deactivated or sterilized, a fluid circulation system for circulating fluids through said chamber, means for generating a microbial deactivation fluid from dry chemical reagents by mixing water therewith, and a water filtration system for filtering water entering said reprocessor, said filtration system including: a fluid feed line connectable to a source of pressurized water, a first filter element and a second filter element in said fluid feed line, said second filter element being downstream from said first filter element and being capable of filtering smaller particles than said first filter element, a method of checking the integrity of at least one of said filter elements, comprising the steps of:

- a) establishing a first known pressure on the upstream side of said filter element;
- b) allowing pressure on said upstream side of said filter element to dissipate through said filter element and through a leak orifice of known dimensions;
- c) monitoring over time the change in pressure on the upstream side of said filter;
- d) establishing a second known pressure on the upstream side of said filter element;
- e) allowing pressure on said upstream side of said filter element to dissipate through said filter element;
- f) monitoring over time the change in pressure on the upstream side of said filter; and

g) determining a flow rate through said filter based on the changes in pressure determined in steps c) and f).

24. **(ORIGINAL)** A method as defined in claim 23, further comprising the step of conducting a pressurized leak test prior to step a).

25. **(ORIGINAL)** A method as defined in claim 24, further comprising the step of conducting a test on said leak orifice prior to step a).

26. **(NEW)** A method as defined in claim 23, wherein the change in pressure on the upstream side of said first and second filter elements is accomplished by using a first and second differential pressure sensing device, said first differential pressure sensing device measuring the difference in the pressure between the upstream side of said first element and the pressure in a control pressure zone, said second differential pressure sensing device measuring the difference in the pressure on the upstream side of said second element to the pressure in said control pressure zone.